Rice University
Department of Economics
ECON 462: Economics of Human Capital
Fall 2020

Instructor: Flávio Cunha
Contact: Flavio.Cunha@rice.edu
Office Hours: The office hours will be online and vary according to the class's replication exercises.
Friday, February 5th, from 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm.
Friday, February 19th, from 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm.
Friday, March 5th, from 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm.
Monday, March 22nd, from 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm.
Friday, April 9th, from 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm.
Friday, April 23rd, from 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm.

TA: Ritika Sethi
Contact: rs98@rice.edu
Office Hours: The office hours will be online and vary according to the class's replication exercises.
Monday, February 8th, from 4:15 pm to 5:30 pm.
Monday, February 22nd, from 4:15 pm to 5:30 pm.
Monday, March 8th, from 4:15 pm to 5:30 pm.
Wednesday, March 24th, from 4:15 pm to 5:30 pm.
Monday, April 12th, from 4:15 pm to 5:30 pm.
Monday, April 26th, from 4:15 pm to 5:30 pm.

Classes: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:20 am to 12:40 pm at HUM 119

Course Description: ECON 462 is a seminar-style class for students who are interested in deepening their data analytical skills and learning about human capital development over the lifecycle.

Course Outcomes: By the end of this course, a student will be able to (i) read empirical papers that use diverse econometric methodologies to evaluate the impact of social programs or small scale interventions; (ii) employ these techniques in their work; (iii) learn economic theories about human capital formation.

Prerequisites: ECON 320.

Course Requirements: There are two requirements.

1. Replication Assignments (66%): The students will submit six replication assignments related to the papers we will cover as part of the course.
2. Class Participation (33%): The students will have to read the papers in advance to each class and lead the discussion. If you do not show up to a class without a valid excuse, you will have to present a report with key points about the work we covered in that class. If you do not, then I will not award you credit for that class.

Students with Documented Disabilities: If you have a documented disability that will require accommodations in this course, please let me know as soon as possible. If you have not done so already, please contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center, Room 111.

Course Structure: The course will follow a four-class cycle. In the first class of each cycle, I will present the scientific context for each of the papers. Before the second class, we will read the article, and the students will lead the discussion. In the third class, we will talk about the replication data and discuss the details of the econometric models. In the fourth class, the students will present the report about the paper's replication.

The papers cover human capital formation in early childhood, adolescence, adulthood, the K-12 education system, and post-secondary education. The articles cover RCT, Instrumental Variables, Differences-in-Differences, and Regression Discontinuity Design in terms of methodology.

Course Schedule

Class Number	Class Dates	Day of the Week	Class Topic
1	26-Jan	Tuesday	Course introduction
2	28-Jan	Thursday	Scientific Background
3	2-Feb	Tuesday	Jackson & Johnson (2019)
4	4-Feb	Thursday	Jackson & Johnson (2019)
5	9-Feb	Tuesday	Students' presentation 1
6	11-Feb	Thursday	Present
7	16-Feb	Tuesday	Herbst (2017)
8	18-Feb	Thursday	Herbst (2017)
9	23-Feb	Tuesday	Students' presentation 2
10	25-Feb	Thursday	Present
11	2-Mar	Tuesday	Kosse et al. (2020)
12	4-Mar	Thursday	Kosse et al. (2020)
13	9-Mar	Tuesday	Students' presentation 3
14	11-Mar	Thursday	Present
15	18-Mar	Thursday	Duflo et al. (2012)
16	23-Mar	Tuesday	Duflo et al. (2012)
17	25-Mar	Thursday	Students' presentation 4
18	30-Mar	Tuesday	Present
19	1-Apr	Thursday	Booji et al. (2017)
20	6-Apr	Tuesday	Booji et al. (2017)
21	13-Apr	Tuesday	Students' presentation 5
22	15-Apr	Thursday	Present
23	20-Apr	Tuesday	Johnson (2020)
24	22-Apr	Thursday	Johnson (2020)
25	27-Apr	Tuesday	Students' presentation 6
26	29-Apr	Thursday	Course conclusion

References:

Booij, A. S., Leuven, E., & Oosterbeek, H. (2017). Ability Peer Effects in University: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment, The Review of Economic Studies. The Review of Economic Studies, 84(2), 547-579.

Duflo, E., Hanna, R., & Ryan, S. (2012). Incentives Work: Getting Teachers to Come to School. American Economic Review, 102(4), 1241-1278.

Herbst, C. M. (2017). Universal Child Care, Maternal Employment, and Children's Long-Run Outcomes: Evidence from the US Lanham Act of 1940. Journal of Labor Economics, 35(2), 519-564.

Johnson, M. S. 2020. "Regulation by Shaming: Deterrence Effects of Publicizing Violations of Workplace Safety and Health Laws." American Economic Review, 110 (6): 1866-1904.

Jackson, C. K. & Johnson, R. C. (2019). Reducing Inequality through Dynamic Complementarity: Evidence from Head Start and Public School Spending. American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 11(4), 310-349.

Kosse, F., Deckers, T., Pinger, P., Schildberg-Hörisch, H., & Falk, A. (2020). The Formation of Prosociality: Causal Evidence on the Role of Social Environment. Journal of Political Economy, 128(2).